Government Policy on Public Distribution System

813: SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Givernment's attention has been drawn to an editorial captioned "Coping with Plenty" published in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 2nd March, 1995 pointing out that his Ministry has no clear cut policy on Public Distribution System which has not resulted in a corresponding reduction in the volume of subsidies Government has expanded on it";

(b) whether it is a fact that Government's move to extend the PDS scheme to 1,700 most backward blocks in the country has not gone very far leaving nearly forty per cent of the population living below the poverty line to fend for themselves; and

(c) if so, what Goernment propose to do for an "efficient management of the food delivery system" so as to ensure that the benefits of food subsidies reach the needy people?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. However, the contention in the Editorial referred to, that the Government does not have a clear cut policy on Public Distribution System (PDS) is incorrect. As per the present policy of the Central Government coverage of Public Distribution System is universal in nature. The intention of the Government is to make available foodgrains to the population at affordable prices. Trere is no proposal to reduce subsidies on foodgrains by curtailing the PDS.

(b) No, Sir. The State Governments/UT Administration have reported that since he inception of the Revamped PDS (RPDS) Scheme till 28-2-95, 14109 additional Fair Price Shops have been opened in these areas against a target of 10,580. More than 35.87 lakhs ration card have been issued against 26.76 lakhs proposed by the States/U.Ts. State Governments/UTs have reported to have eliminated 115.71 lakh bogus ration cards during the same period. Additional storage capacity of 5.31 lakhs MTs have been hired/created 54319 Fair Price Shops are reported to be under the Door Step Delivery Scheme in the RPDS areas till 28-2-95. In these areas States/UTs have constituted about 1.01 lakhs Fair Price Shop level vigilance commitees. Foodgrains meant for distribution in the RPDS areas are issued at specailly subsidised Central Issue Prices which are Rs. 50/- per quintal lower than the normal Central Issue Prices for the PDS. Presenty, the offtake of foodgrains in RPDS areas is around 4 milion tonnes.

(c) The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and bulk allocation of six key essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar imported edible oil, soft coke and kerosene to States/UTs. The operational responsibility of further distribution of these commodities within the States/UTs rests with them. The Central Government monitors the implementation of PDS/RPDS in the States/UTs through various periodic reports, advisory council meetings, regional meetings etc. States/UTs. have been advised to keep strict watch over supply of essential commodities and price situation and take remedial action under various Acts so that the common man does not suffer. The Central Government provides financial assistance to States/UTs for construction of godowns and perchase of vans to augment their storage and delivery system.

Assistance to Bihar from Consumer welfare Fund

814. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have provided any assistance to Bihar from Consumer Welfare Fund during the years 1992, 1993, 1994 and so far in 1995; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC

DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) Consumer Welfare Fund has become operational in 1994. Financial assistance of Rupees one lakh forty thousand has been approved from this fund by the Standing Committee to Dr. Jagan Nath Mishra Educational Sah Bal and Mahila Kalyan Society, Muzzafarpur, Bihar.

Opening of Super Bazar Branches

815. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to open branches of Super Bazar in other parts of the country especially in metropolitan cities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (c) Super Bazar has not yet been registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act. Therefore, there is no proposal to open new branches of Super Bazar in other parts of the country especially in metropolitan cities.

Losses Suffered by Super Bazar

816. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total loss suffered by Super Bazar as on 1st November, 1994;

(b) what are the details of the amount spent on G.M., D.G.M.S. Managers, C&F and other officials viz Supervisors, Sales Assistants on account of expenditure incurred for their office expenses, TA|DA and other miscellaneous expenses and on other allowances paid to them during the last three years year-wise;

(c) whether Government are aware that the losses of Super Bazar may be made up in one year by checking extravegent expenditure;

(d) if so, whether Government propose to take some measures to curb the increasing loss on the pretext of technical grounds with a view to save the consumer services;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH):

(a) The Accounting Year of Super Bazar. The Cooperative Store Ltd. is the financial Year and the prevailing accounting system does not facilitate working out the results for part of the financial year. However, it may be stated that the tentative working results for the period 1st April 1994 to 31st October '94 do not indicate that the Store is in loss.

(b) The G.M., DGM and CAF are Govt. Officers on deputation to Super Bazar for a fixed tenure and the emoluments being paid to them are as per salary and allowances drawn by them in their parent department and in accordance with the terms and conditions of their deputation.

As regards other officials of Super Bazar, who are employees of the Store, their salaries are drawn as per the grades fixed for each category of staff. The details of the grades are as per statement. (*See* below.)

The details of expenditure on salary, wages and other benefits to employees and on travelling & conveyance for the last 3 years are as under:-